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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION KUWAIT August 24-25: Human Rights, Iraq, Terrorism

**1. SUMMARY:** The long-awaited recognition by the government Kuwait of an NGO dedicated to human rights became a lightning rod for comments both for and against. Many commentators condemned the violent incursion of Coalition forces into Najaf, and others continued to discuss extremist ideologies and their influence on the youth, but both issues were drowned out by the NGO discussion. Conservatives declared it simply an American puppet group bent on meddling in Kuwaiti affairs. Liberals, long champions of the new NGO, praised the group and explored the perceived hypocrisy of their opponents. Owner and editor-in-chief Ahmad al-Jarallah wrote in independent al-Seyassah (8/24): "What is strange is that the opposition denies us the decision to respect human rights, while at the same they require it of the U.S., whom they say has pressured us into recognizing the society in the first place." END SUMMARY.

**2. "Opposition that Violates Human Rights"**  
Owner and editor-in-chief Ahmad al-Jarallah wrote in independent al-Seyassah (8/24): "We wonder why the Kuwaiti opposition is against the recognition of a Human Rights Society in Kuwait. Do they wish for these rights to remain without protection, and hence be subject to abuse and without any supervising or protecting body? Or are these people against the Society's recognition because they see in it the beginning of equilibrium and balance between the institutions of the Kuwaiti civil society and its electoral body? What is strange is that the opposition denies us the decision to respect human rights, while at the same they require it of the U.S., whom they say has pressured us into recognizing the society in the first place. In doing this, the opposition is limiting this noble cause to the U.S., whom they say does not believe in God and whose killing is favorable."

**3. "The Scene in Najaf and the American Mistakes"**  
Ammar Taqi wrote in independent al-Rai al-A'am (8/24): "The American use of harsh force in the recent events in Najaf is the damning proof that their promises of bringing a peace and stability more humane than that during Saddam's rule are nothing but lies. It doesn't seem that the U.S., which has sunk deeper in the Iraqi swamp, has learned anything from its strategic ally Israel regarding how military might does nothing but encourage more resistance against the occupier. It is a certainty that the disrespect of holy sites and murder which the Americans are spreading in Najaf today will remain in the minds of Iraqis for years to come, and that the future beyond the events of Najaf will be a grim one."

**4. "He Hit Me Then Cried and Complained Against Me"**  
Ali Ahmad al-Baghli wrote in independent al-Qabas (8/24): "I couldn't believe my eyes when I read that one of the Kuwaiti members of the Salafi [Islamic fundamentalist] movement blamed terrorism on liberals. How could this be when Kuwait's fundamentalists are known to have made a pact with the government to fight constitutional freedoms, openness, and modernization? Because of the fundamentalist-government coalition books are supervised, films are censored, innocent musical events are not allowed, universities are segregated, women's Olympic sports are not aired, etc. Those fundamentalists will not be satisfied until they hold on to power, so they can terrorize and murder the society, and hence leave it as barren as their likes have in Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and the Sudan."

**5. "HI . . . And More to Come"**  
Dr. Sajed al-Abdali wrote in independent al-Rai al-A'am (8/25): "Hi is an eloquent Arabic speaking magazine aimed at youth, printed in the latest style, produced professionally, and has a copy editor. This is an important matter since most of our Arabic magazines don't have such a man. The magazine's pages have varied cultural topics that cover arts, sports, technology, science, literature, and others, all of which are written in meticulous form. Despite this being a form of the cultural invasion we have so often heard about, I cannot call for the boycott of such a wonderful magazine."

16. "An Unfair Organized Campaign!"

Ali Ahmad al-Baghli wrote in independent al-Qabas (8/25):  
"The campaign led by the fundamentalists against Dr. Najma Idrees as punishment for criticizing the Fundamentalists by requiring her students to study Dr. Khalifa al-Waqayaan's book 'The Journey of Dreams and Worries,' which diagnoses the reasons and sources of terrorism in our society, is a blatant attack on the freedom of education, and the independence of that process, especially after a committee deemed the book suitable for teaching. All we ask is that government organizations, and in particular Kuwait University and the Minister of Education, not be affected by this unfair campaign so as to prevent this group from interfering with what is taught at our universities."

17. "NO to Playing Around With Human Rights"

Abdullatif al-Du'aij wrote in independent al-Qabas (8/25):  
"The Salafi dogma is the most critical of those who are not of it, and is known for infringing upon the personal and religious rights of others. It is funny how the Head of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, Mr. Waleed Tabtaba'i claims that the current Human Rights Society has not shown interest in his clan's complaint against state security, whereas he and his clan, and his entire parliament, stand against hundreds of deprived Christian citizens who are not even allowed to sound the bells of their churches."

Tueller